

Questions and Answers About Assessments in Career Education (ACE)

What is the purpose of ACE?

The ACE program, patterned after the well-established Golden State Examination program, is designed to recognize students who demonstrate outstanding achievement on rigorous examinations in selected career-technical areas. All examinations are based on career education standards.

What is the scope of ACE?

ACE examinations assess students' knowledge within career-technical areas and their application of that knowledge. The following examinations are included in the spring 2000 testing schedule:

- Agricultural Core
- Computer Science and Information Systems
- Health Care, Level I
- Food Services and Hospitality
- Technology Core (Industrial and Technology Education)

How are the examinations developed?

A committee of teachers, industry representatives, college and university professors, and other related specialists develop the test questions and tasks for each examination. ACE examinations are reviewed and field-tested to ensure that the test content reflects the industry-approved model curriculum standards for each career area. The tests also undergo thorough content, community, and technical reviews to ensure that the tests provide reliable and valid results and are accessible to all students, avoid biased or offensive content, and protect the privacy of students and their families.

Who is eligible to take the ACE?

Each examination is made available to a student only one time. For this reason, it is important for students to take a particular examination when they have had an opportunity to learn the content covered. Prior to taking an ACE examination, students should complete the appropriate coursework that provides instruction in all of the standards covered by the examination. For example, students enrolled in a two-year agricultural core program should wait until the end of their second year to take the ACE in Agricultural Core.

Why should students participate in ACE?

Students can benefit in a variety of ways by taking the ACE examinations. For example, students can:

- receive formal recognition for their achievement in a career-technical area.
- be better prepared for successful transition to work or higher education in their career field.
- establish a record of accomplishment that is valued by potential employers and institutions of higher education.

What happens when students do well?

Students who achieve high honors, honors, and recognition on an ACE examination will receive an Award of Excellence from the state and have their achievement recorded on their high school transcripts. Students who achieve the high honors or honors designations also receive an ACE insignia on their diplomas.

What assistance is available for teachers and students?

The *ACE Guide for Teachers* has been developed to provide essential information and preparation guidelines for teachers. The intent of the guide is to serve as an instructional aid in the classroom. Each guide includes a section on test content, test structure, strategies for preparing students for taking an ACE examination, achievement levels, sample multiple-choice and written-response questions, general scoring criteria, and sample student work. New to the 2000 guides is an expanded section on preparing students for written-response questions. The ACE guides are available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cilbranch/sca> on the Internet.

How can students prepare for ACE?

When taking an ACE examination, students will need to use their career-technical content knowledge. They will also use their writing, problem solving, and analytic skills. Students can prepare for an ACE examination by:

- completing coursework that provides instruction in all the content standards covered by the examination.
- practicing written-response questions or other tasks that require problem solving and analytic skills.
- reviewing the sample questions and student work provided in the *ACE Guide for Teachers*.

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When are the examinations given?

All examinations are offered each spring. In 2000 the testing window extends from May 1 through May 31.

How are the examinations administered?

ACE examinations are administered within career-technical classrooms with the teacher acting as the proctor. The specific procedures for administering ACE are sent with the testing materials. The information includes administration procedures, special accommodations, proctor instructions, and instructions for returning materials.

How long are the examinations?

Each examination is administered in two 45-minute sessions. Each session is made up of multiple-choice questions and a written-response question or problem-solving task.

Is there a charge for the examinations?

No. ACE is administered at state expense.

How can schools sign up to participate?

Approximately three to four months prior to test administration, district superintendents receive registration forms for participation. Schools must sign up through their district. Teachers and principals should contact their district superintendent, vocational education coordinator, or testing coordinator if they are interested in participating in ACE.

When are ACE results available?

Student, school, and district reports of the spring results are sent to district and county superintendents in the fall following test administration.

Questions about Assessments in Career Education should be directed to:

Standards and Assessment Division
California Department of Education

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